



JOINT MEETING
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INTERGROUPS
CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
&
URBAN

Natural Solutions for Urban Areas in Europe

14 November 2012

15:00-17:00

Room P3C050

European Parliament, Brussels

AGENDA

Co-Chaired by:

MEP Jan Olbrycht, Chair of the “Urban” Intergroup in the European Parliament

MEP MEP Vittorio Prodi co-Chair of the “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development” Intergroup in the European Parliament

In Europe, around 75% of the population lives in urban areas and in some countries this number is expected to grow up to 80% by 2020 (EEA, 2009). With increasing population density and mounting development pressure, large areas of land in the immediate surroundings of urban areas are undergoing a rapid process of urbanisation.

Residents of urban communities depend heavily on biodiversity, notably for the provisioning of food, clean air, drinking water, climate regulation and recreation, but also for many other non-material services such as education and inspiration and thus have a vested interest in the protection of the natural environment, both within and well beyond urban boundaries. However, the dependence on and interactions of urbanised areas with the surrounding rural landscape and its biodiversity and ecosystems present a knowledge gap that needs to be bridged. Awareness of urban interactions with nature is highly important for establishing urban resilience.

There is an enormous unseen potential in nature for the promotion of cost-effective solutions to making cities more resilient. We can use biodiversity and ecosystems to address some of the biggest challenges cities face today: to reduce climate change impacts, to ensure food, water and energy security, but also to enhance quality of life, save money and promote economic development.

In line with the EU Strategy for Biodiversity to 2020, the agenda for smart, sustainable and inclusive urban growth and the strategy for a resource efficient Europe, there are already many good examples for biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation, restoration and valuation that can be duplicated. There is a lot of potential to develop new projects and ideas for innovative and nature-based solutions to the pressures European urban areas are facing.





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The workshop will seek to raise awareness of the value of biodiversity and nature-based solutions to help European cities cope with the challenges they are experiencing today in the face of rapid urbanisation. The aim of the meeting will be to share experiences and best practices on the economic and social value of biodiversity and ecosystems services for urban life.

Opening session

15.00-15.05 Welcoming words and introduction by MEP Jan Olbrycht

Presentations

15.05-15.15 European smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: European cities of tomorrow

Mr. Marco Fritz, Nature and Biodiversity Unit DG Environment, European Commission

15.15-15.25 Biodiversity, ecosystems services & urban areas

Prof. Dagmar Haase, Humboldt University, Berlin - Representative of the URBES project

15.25-15.55 Value of nature based solutions for urban areas

*** A regional perspective:**

Ms. Maria Clelia Mele, Regional government of Tuscany

*** An NGO perspective:**

Dr. Lawrence Jones-Walters, Deputy Executive Director and Senior, European Centre for Nature Conservation

*** A business perspective:**

Ms. Linde Vertriest, Consultant Sustainability, Arcadis Belgium

15.55-16.15 Best practices for biodiversity from European cities

- Mr. Serge Kempeneers, Directors at the Bruxelles Environnement – IBGE

- Mr. Luis Andrés Orive, Director General for Strategy Environment and Nature, Municipality Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain – “European Green Capital 2012”





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Debate with the audience

16:15-16:55 Question & answer session

Closing session

16:55-17:00 Conclusions by MEP Vittorio Prodi

